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Mr. Sarah J. Shepherd

Mayville, Mo.

January the 14th

1873



S.A. Schöff. sc.

L O N N I E ,

O U R L I T T L E L A M B .

“HE SHALL GATHER THE LAMBS WITH HIS ARM, AND CARRY THEM
IN HIS BOSOM.”

“SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, AND FORBID THEM NOT, TO COME UNTO
ME, FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

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LONNIE, OUR LITTLE LAMB.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE LAMB.

EVERY home has its objects of peculiar interest and value. In our house, among many articles of ornament and beauty, one little China lamb that stands upon the mantel-piece in the west room is the dearest and most sacred of all. It is not pretty nor costly, but the associations connected with it make it very precious in our eyes. It was the possession and delight of our own little lamb, who has now gone

from us for ever. It was given him by a dear friend a few days before his death, and was the last toy of which he took any notice. When he could no longer handle it, he wanted it to stand just there upon the mantel shelf, where he could look at it from his bed; and there it still remains, in the very place, a monument and memento of our darling. No wonder that we prize it so much. It seems sometimes as if it would almost speak, and call aloud the dear name of the departed.

His mother usually called him her "little lamb." It was a name he almost chose for himself, and during his last sickness he seemed to prefer it to any other. Indeed, while he lay there on the bed, weak, and suffering, and fading away, his mother could not use an epithet more suitable for him than her "dear little lamb." Perhaps the reason he loved this toy so much was, that it reminded him

of this his favorite name, and the way by which he received it.

His mother used to sing to him a great deal. All the pretty hymns and songs prepared so numerous for children were familiar to him. Often when she put him to bed at night, she would seat herself by his side on his little low bed, and hold his hand, and sing, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," "The little girl with a happy look," "There is a land of pure delight," and other beautiful pieces, until his eyelids dropped over the sweet, blue eyes, and he was far away in the land of forgetfulness. These and a few others were his favorite songs, and he was unwilling for his mother to sing any others. Sometimes she would say she was tired of singing the same things over and over again, and ask him if he wouldn't like something new; but he very seldom said yes.

One day, when she was out shopping, she

saw in a store a book called "The Good Shepherd." It was full of stories and pictures about Jesus, and as she thought it would please her little ones at home, she bought it. It had a pretty green cover, and the pictures were so beautiful, that this little boy took a great fancy to it. Then his mother had plenty of occupation for her leisure moments, to show him the pictures, and read to him the stories it contained. It was pleasant employment for her. She loved nothing better than to take her little ones upon her knee, and show them pictures and tell them stories, and she took particular enjoyment in reading to them from this book, for she wanted them to learn all about the dear, kind Saviour, and to love him with all the heart. She was truly glad that she had found such a treasure of a book.

One day, when she had been showing it to this little boy, she said, —

“I know a very nice hymn about this Good Shepherd. Wouldn't you like to hear it?”

“Oh, yes,” he said; and he listened with the deepest attention and sparkling eyes, while she sung to a simple tune these words:—

“See the kind Shepherd, Jesus, stands,
With all engaging charms;
Hark! how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms!

“‘Permit them to approach,’ he cries,
‘Nor scorn their humble name,
For ’twas to bless such souls as these
The Lord of angels came.’

“He'll lead us to the heavenly streams
Where living waters flow,
And guide us to the fruitful fields
Where trees of knowledge grow.

“The feeblest lamb amid the flock
Shall be its Shepherd's care;

While folded in the Saviour's arms,
We're safe from every snare."

How delighted the little fellow was with this hymn! He clapped his hands with joy, and asked a great many questions about it.

"Am I one of Jesus' tender lambs?" he asked.

"Yes, my dear, and he calls you to come to him, that he may fold you in his arms, and love and take care of you always."

After that day, this was his favorite evening song. His mother proposed that he should learn it himself. That pleased him very much, and he asked if he might say it with his evening prayer. So she repeated it to him line by line and verse by verse, until he had got the whole safely stowed away in his memory. It took him a good many evenings to learn it all; but when he could say it perfectly, he appeared

very much gratified, and his mother was pleased, too. That was the first hymn he ever learned.

After that he used to speak of himself as a little lamb, and liked to have his mother call him so.

“I’m one of Jesus’ little lambs,” he said, one morning, when his mother was dressing him. Then, as if a new thought had struck him, he turned round suddenly to his mother, and asked, “What are you, mamma? Are you a little lamb, too?”

“I suppose I should hardly be called a little lamb,” answered his mother, smiling, “though I am one of the Good Shepherd’s flock. It is the children who are called the lambs.”

“Oh, then you are one of the old sheep, I suppose,” said he. “Well, you look like one,” he added, as he surveyed his mamma’s face and person.

He thought, I suppose, that she looked good and loving, and as if she could take care of him, just as the mother sheep takes care of her little lambs, and so it was all right that she should be called a sheep. His mother laughed very much at this little funny saying, and it passed as quite a joke in the family.

When he had just learned the last verse, he asked what "snare" meant, in the line "We're safe from every snare."

"Little lambs are exposed to a great many dangers," replied his mother.

"Sometimes they stray away from the fold, or they may fall into a pit or hole, or perhaps the wolves get into the flock and devour them. A good shepherd always takes great pains to look after the lambs of the flock, to guard them from all these things. So little children are exposed to many dangers. Satan goes about, the Bible says, 'as a roaring lion, seeking

whom he may devour.' And they are often tempted to stray away from the right paths, and commit sin, and fall into great trouble and unhappiness. The Good Shepherd looks after them all the time, and takes care of them, and saves them from harm and danger. As the hymn says, —

‘ While folded in the Saviour’s arms,
We’re *safe* from every snare.’ ”

He listened attentively to what his mother said, and seemed to understand it all, and after this took a special pleasure in repeating this last verse, though he always would put in the word “little” before “snare.” He would say, “We’re safe from every *little* snare.” His mother tried several times to correct his mistake; but he had got the idea that the snares must be little that were set for little folks, and it annoyed him so much to leave out the word, that his mother let it go.

This is the way he came to be called "little lamb."

His thoughts about the Good Shepherd and his little lambs were so very pleasant to him, that one of his dear friends who was in the habit of writing hymns for the Sunday school children wrote one on purpose for him. She sent it to be printed in one of the Sunday school papers which he was always so delighted to get, for she thought it would please him better if it was read to him from the paper, and he was then told that it was made on purpose for him. This was it.

"Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep,
Watch around his flock doth keep;
From the fearful beasts of prey
Guards his little lambs alway.

"Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep,
Pastures fresh and green doth keep;
Where the living streams do flow,
There the lambs may feed and grow."

“Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep,
Under-shepherds kind doth keep;
Parents, teachers, friends in need,
Who the sickly ones may lead.

“Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep,
Every lamb will surely keep;
No rude enemy shall dare
Pluck one from his tender care.

“Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep,
Still a better fold doth keep;
Up where heavenly pastures spring,
Every little lamb he'll bring.”

But the dear little one for whom it was written never saw it. His body had slept for more than two months in his grave among the cowslips and violets, before the paper that contained it came. He was himself blissfully feeding in the green pastures and by the still waters of the heavenly fold.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRECIOUS ONE.

BUT this was not the only name of love that was applied to this darling child. He was one of seven children, but so peculiarly sweet and winning in his disposition and manners, that he was the joy of the whole family. He was like a sunbeam, a fragrant blossom, a perpetual song about the house, and his brothers and sisters all had their own pet names for him.

His father called him his "angel child." Whether it was that he seemed loving and gentle like the angels, or from a presentiment that he would soon be one of their number, I do not know. A feeling of pain would creep over the mother's heart when

she heard it, for it seemed to her as a foretelling of sorrow for her. His brothers and sisters used to smile, but never felt a pang of envy or ill will that he was so called, for they all loved him too much.

Aunt Sarah gave him the name of “precious one.” When he was just learning to talk, he went with his oldest sister to visit this aunt, and when he came home he went through with his catechism, as we called it, in a most amusing manner. When he was asked what he was, he would answer, “Papa’s angel, mamma’s lamb, Nellie’s birdie, aunt Sarah’s precious one,” and so on through the whole list.

One day a lady called to see his mother. As usual, he opened the door, and waited upon her into the parlor.

“And what is your name, little boy?” she asked, patting him upon the head. Now his name was rather long and hard for him to speak—Alonzo Frederic; and

when he tried to say the words, it did not sound to other people much like a name. So, as this lady did not understand him, she put the question again, in another form — “What does your mother call you, darling?” “Her precious one,” said he, very distinctly. This was the first of the many endearing epithets that he happened to think of just then, I suppose. The lady understood that perfectly.

“That is a sweet name, and you *are* her precious one, I know,” said she, as she stooped down and kissed him.

“I was attracted to him so much,” she said, afterward, “by the sweet, artless manner with which he answered me.”

Oh, how precious he was to us all, we can not begin to tell. It seems very natural, I know, when a little child is taken away by death, for the father and mother, the brothers and sisters, and all the friends, to feel that he was especially dear and

interesting. Death seems to throw an enchantment about the memory of his little victims. But there are some children who are so very engaging, and affectionate, and lovely in spirit, that they are esteemed as such while living, so that it is not uncommon for people to say, "Such a child will not live; he is too beautiful for earth;" and it has passed into a proverb that the loveliest flowers are the earliest plucked. This was true with regard to our Lonnie. His heart was overflowing with love to every one; he was frank and social in his manners, generous in his disposition, and almost always easily controlled. He had a roguish twinkle about his clear, blue eye, and such a funny little twirl about his rosy lips when he was speaking, that one who looked at him could scarcely keep from smiling; and when he was quiet, there was a depth and sweetness in the expression of his face that made it very attractive, even

to strangers. He used to say, too, many cunning and wise things, and ask questions that showed how much he thought. I used to be reminded often, when I heard him talking, of the lines written by an affectionate father about another little boy who had gone to live with the angels.

“Some have thought that in the dawning,
In our being's freshest glow,
God is nearer little children
Than their parents ever know;
And that, if you listen sharply,
Better things than you can teach,
And a sort of mystic wisdom,
Trickle through their careless speech.”

CHAPTER III.

MR. FASSETT'S COUNTRY.

IN the month of June, when Alonzo was just three years old, his mother was making preparations to go into the country to spend the summer. He did not understand, of course, the difference between city and country, and why his parents thought best to go there; but he had some sort of charming idea, floating before his eye, of large yards, and great trees, and plenty of chickens, pigs, and cows, of birds singing and flowers growing in with the green grass, and he knew it was going to be "real nice," to go there and board with Mr. Fassett.

"What kind of a house does Mr. Fassett

live in?" he asked; "and where does he keep his moolly cows?"

"I don't know," replied his mother, "but we shall see when we get there, and the moolly cows will give Lonnie plenty of milk to drink."

"Oh, goody, goody!" shouted Lonnie, and he ran away, singing the little ditty his kind sister so often hushed him to sleep with.

"Cushie, cow bonnie,
Come give me your milk,
And I will give you
A gown of silk.

Cushie, cow bonnie!

Cushie, cow bonnie!"

And then, as he danced back again to take another look at the half-packed trunks, mother struck up another of his favorite songs:—

"Thank you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk to soak my bread;

Every morning, every night,
Warm and sweet, and fresh and white."

"I like the moolly cows," said Lonnie.
"I think God was very good to make
'em."

The journey was long and tiresome, but no one would have thought it from looking at the little fellow, who was as good-natured and happy all the time as if he were at home. But he was tired, and when they arrived at nightfall at Mr. Fassett's little white cottage on the hill, his mother hastened to give him his supper, and put him to bed. Every thing looked new and strange to him—the white walls without any pictures, the uncarpeted floors, low windows, and high beds; and he began to think it wasn't quite so pleasant as he had expected to find it.

"I don't think I like Mr. Fassett's country very well, mamma," he said, as she was just lifting him into bed, and giving

him her good-night kiss. "I like my papa's country best."

"Oh, my little Lonnie is very tired to-night," said his mother, "and it is dark, and the birds and the chickens have all gone to bed. To-morrow Lonnie will like it better."

And sure enough, in the morning, when the sun was up, and the little boy had waked, refreshed by his long, sweet sleep, all things seemed changed. The birds were singing merrily in the maple trees before the house, the chickens were peeping all around the yard, the cows were lowing on their way to pasture, the water of the brook running along on the opposite side of the road was sparkling in the light, and the little white church on a distant hill looked bright and glistening in the sunbeams. From that hour Lonnie liked Mr. Fassett's country, and the good man himself, as well as his mother could wish.





And when the summer months were over, and they had all come back to their city home, little Lonnie never tired of hearing and talking of the things he had seen and done while they were away. He would often look up from his play to tell his mother about his going down to the mill with Mr. Fassett, and seeing the great wheels go spinning round and round with such a noise, or of the beautiful time he had when Mr. Fassett took him and all the children in the boat and rowed them ever so far up the creek, and got them pretty flowers—or about his going to pasture, when his kind friend carried the big tin pail, and he carried the little one, to get some warm milk from the great red and white cow there. His little heart had become very closely attached to the good man with whom they had pleasantly lived for so many weeks, and scarcely a day

passed but Lonnie talked in his sweet, affectionate way about him. He never used, in speaking of their summer home, the name of the village, but always called it "Mr. Fassett's country."

CHAPTER IV.

A LESSON ABOUT HEAVEN.

ONE morning, about two months after their return home, Lonnie was saying his prayer, kneeling by his mother's side, and as he repeated the last words, "For Jesus' sake, Amen," his mother took his little face between her two hands, and looking into his bright eyes, asked, —

"Does my little lambie know what that means, 'For Jesus' sake'?"

"I don't know; what is it?" asked the child.

"Who is Jesus, Lonnie? You know."

"Oh, yes, he's the Good Shepherd; and he was God's little boy, too, I guess — wasn't he?"

His mother smiled at his innocent familiarity, and answered, —

“He is God’s dear Son, who came down from heaven, and lived in this world, and suffered, and died, that we might become good and happy. You recollect about his being a baby, and about the shepherds and wise men who came to see him, and the wicked king who wanted to kill him, and ——”

“Oh, yes, there’s the picture up there about Joseph, and Mary, and the ass, and the little baby in his mamma’s arms, and the angel telling them to make haste and run away;” and he pointed to one of his favorite pictures upon the wall, which his mother had very often explained to him.

“And do you remember about the wicked people who nailed him to the cross, where he died? You remember — don’t you?”

“Yes,” said Lonnie slowly, as though he were thinking it all over.

“Well, Jesus died on the cross for his love to us, and our heavenly Father has told us that we may ask him for any thing we want, if we will ask for it in Jesus’ name ; and he has promised for Jesus’ sake to give us whatever we need. So when you pray, or I, or any one, we always say, ‘Please give us these things for Jesus’ sake.’”

“Yes,” repeated Lonnie again, very slowly ; and then he ran away to his play. In a few minutes he came running back to his mother, with an eager look in his chubby little face.

“Mamma,” said he, “where is Jesus now ?”

“In heaven, my dear.”

“And where is heaven ?”

“Heaven is God’s home, Lonnie, where he lives with the dear Saviour and the holy

angels, and all the good people that have lived in this world and died here. We are not going to live always in this world, and when we die, you and I, and papa, and all the folks, if we love God, and try to please him, he will take us to heaven."

The child was silent a moment. At last he said, with a tone and expression peculiar to him when an idea had not fully got into his little brain, —

"*I don't know* about heaven."

The breakfast bell rang just then, but Lonnie did not forget the conversation, for in the course of the day, he said once and again, "*I don't know about that heaven, mother.*"

He meant he could not understand about it.

His mother saw that he was trying to grasp a thought too large for him, an idea of the unseen and spiritual, which even grown-up people oftentimes but feebly com-

prehend; and wishing not to confuse his mind, she added but a few, simple words to what she had told him in the morning. One thing, the only thing perhaps which would have given him a clearer understanding of heaven, was in his case entirely wanting. Not one of the inhabitants of that invisible world had Lonnie ever known. The place that seemed so real and familiar to his parents as the happy abode of many whom they had known and loved here below, could not be any thing but a distant, cold, unreal idea to their little boy, because he could not connect it with any known, personal existence. He had sisters there, but he had never seen them, for they had died before he was born; and grandparents, and aunts, and cousins, but he had only heard about them, and they were to his imagination as ancient and far away as Adam, or Moses, or Daniel, about whom he loved to hear. So the matter had to

rest just there, until God in his providence should see best to make the mystery plain.

It is a great blessing, dear children, though attended with much pain, when God sends his angel Death to take away those that are near and dear to us. For then the door of heaven is opened, as it were, and we are permitted to get such a glimpse of its nearness, its reality, and its bliss, as we can never afterward forget. It makes us love it, and desire to be there ourselves — so that when we are called we are more willing to go from this earthly home. Have you not found it so?

CHAPTER V.

MR. FASSETT'S NEW COUNTRY.

It was not long before God put forth his hand, and opened the heavenly gates, so that Lonnie might look in.

That very evening, after this talk about heaven had taken place, as the family were assembled at the tea table, Lonnie's papa said that he had some very sad news to communicate; and then, while every other face was turned with deep and solemn interest to his, he told the story of the sudden and shocking death of their friend, Mr. Fassett. He had been caught between the great wheels of his mill, and so crushed that he lived but a few hours. But he

had died in peace, trusting in God, and hoping for a glorious resurrection.

All were so excited by the painful intelligence of this dreadful event, that no one thought of Lonnie, or noticed him, until he broke out into violent cries and sobs.

“Oh, dear! oh, dear!” he exclaimed; “something has come to Mr. Fassett, and I don’t know what it is.”

“Poor Mr. Fassett is dead, Lonnie, dear,” said one of his sisters; “and we shall never, never see him any more.”

But this only increased the poor child’s grief, and it was distressing to hear his cries. He had perceived, from what he could understand of his father’s conversation, and from the sorrowful looks and sad exclamations around the table, that something very dreadful had happened to his good friend; but he had never seen death, and could not comprehend what it meant.

His mother tried in vain to soothe and

pacify him, but without any success, until at last she thought of their morning's talk.

“Lonnie,” said she, as she wiped away the streaming tears, and smoothed the hair off from the fair forehead,—“Lonnie, I will tell you something pleasant. Mr. Fassett has gone to heaven. He loved God, and God has taken him up to live with him. He is now with Jesus and the holy angels in God's home, and he is very, very happy in that beautiful country, of which, you know, the hymn says,—

‘There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers.’

We ought to be glad he is there.”

The little face brightened at the first mention of heaven, and he listened very attentively to every word his mother said.

“Oh,” he said, smiling, and with that singular intonation with which he always

spoke when an idea he had been seeking had opened to his understanding.

“Oh, I am glad,” he said again, a moment after; and he soon looked as placid and happy as if a great joy had come to him. In a little while more he was running about, clapping his hands, and telling every one, —

“Oh, I’m so glad! Mr. Fassett has gone to heaven.”

The thought remained with him, and grew brighter and pleasanter, and for days and weeks his chief topic of conversation was Mr. Fassett and heaven.

“When shall we go to see him there, mamma?” he asked.

“I don’t know, my dear,” was his mother’s reply; “whenever God sees best to take us.”

“Will you go with me, mamma, when I go? I don’t want to go alone.”

“Perhaps, my dear, God will permit us

to go together ; but we can not tell. But if I do or not, Jesus will go with us. He never lets his dear children go through the valley of death alone."

And then his dear mother tried to explain to him that at some time they must both die, and every body must die ; but how, or when, or where, they could not tell. God would do as he thought best about that. And then she told him that death was called a dark valley, but God would open the door of heaven, and let the light from that glorious world shine down through it, and he himself would walk by their side, so that it would not be unpleasant. She told him that the body did not go to heaven, but was put into a coffin, and buried in the grave, and only the soul went to God. But this sounded dark, and cold, and dreary to the child, and he would instantly turn from it to the one,

clear, bright spot that heaven had come to be in his imagination.

“I like heaven,” he said; “Mr. Fassett is there, and we shall go to see him some time.”

And his mother sung those beautiful words to him, —

“O’er all those wide-extended plains
Shines one eternal day;
There God, the Sun, for ever reigns,
And scatters night away.

“No chilling winds, or poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.

“When shall I reach that happy place,
And be for ever blest?
When shall I see my Father’s face,
And in his bosom rest?”

From that time Lonnie ceased almost entirely to talk about the scenes and pleas-

ures of the summer which were so familiarly associated with his departed friend. He no longer spoke of the place, as he had invariably done, as "Mr. Fassett's country." His mind looked forward to the reunion which he was anticipating with him in the better land. Now he spoke of "Mr. Fassett's *new* country," where he should one day live with him, and be always good and happy — the glorious home where there was no pain, or sickness, or dying, and where God would wipe away the tears from all eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

MORE FRIENDS IN HEAVEN.

It was not long after this that another friend, the beloved and respected family physician, was suddenly taken away by death. But when Lonnie heard of that, dearly as he loved the good doctor who had so faithfully attended him in the hour of sickness, he sprang at once over the incomprehensible darkness of the tomb to the radiant glory on the other side.

“Now, mamma, I have another friend in heaven. I’m so glad! Mr. Fassett is there, and Dr. R. is there; and who else, mamma? Tell me.”

And his mamma told him of his dear little sister Gracie, as pure and lovely as

the fresh, white flowers in the garden; how she had withered beneath the sickly breath of summer, and God had caught her up to bloom without fading in his garden above; and of his little sister Alice, of whom he loved to have his mother read from the “Songs for the Little Ones,” —

“Dear little babe, she has gone to her rest,
Where never a sin shall stain her breast.

•••••
She lived on earth but a little while,
She died before we had seen her smile;
But she was our sister, and is so still;
Sweet Alice we called her, and always will.”

“Dear little Alice,” said his mother, “was scarcely permitted to stay long enough on earth for us to know her, before our heavenly Father took her up to live with the angels. Both of these, darling, died before you were born; but though you never knew them, they know and love you, and eagerly watch to see if

you are growing good, that you may one day join them in heaven."

"There is one thing," added his mamma, after a little silence, "that always makes me feel happy about our dear little ones that are in heaven. They will never speak or hear an unkind word, Lonnie, and never see or do any thing that is wicked."

Lonnie looked up in her face very earnestly, — "Would you like to have me there, then, mamma?"

"No, my little lamb; I like to have you here, to comfort me and make me happy, while you are learning about Jesus and how to be good. But I want you to overcome every naughty habit and temper, so that if God should send for you as he did for them, I should feel sure that you were in heaven with them, and then I should have the same pleasant thoughts about you."

And his mother told him of other little boys and girls whom she had known, who were arrayed in the white robes of the upper temple — of many of her own dear relatives and friends who were there, and of the wise and good of other ages and other lands, an innumerable company, about the throne of God. And from that time, as long as he lived, nothing delighted Lonnie more than to sit upon his mother's knee, and watch the gorgeous, sunset clouds from the charming west window, while she told him a story of "somebody who is in heaven."

Sometimes the little boy was restless in time of family prayers, and his mother thought it was because he did not understand, and so could not feel interested in the exercises. She thought that family worship ought always to have something about it to reach down to the comprehension and fix the attention of the little ones

present. So one morning his mother, who always read the portion of Scripture herself, said, as she was taking her accustomed seat, —

“Lonnie, dear, listen, for I am going to read about heaven.”

At once his whole heart was in the service. He took his little chair, and placing it directly opposite his mamma, he folded his little hands, and never took his eyes from her face while she read that wonderful description of the new Jerusalem, contained in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. Then they sang, —

“Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me!”

There was no complaint of the little boy's restlessness that morning; and the next day, immediately after breakfast, he said, “Now, mamma, can you find any more

about heaven? Won't you read some more about it?"

So his mother read the next chapter, and from time to time selected those passages from the holy word of God that referred to the glorious home of the redeemed. Oh, how the child seemed to enjoy them — to swallow them as a sweet morsel with eagerness! They were indeed as honey in the honey comb to his taste.

It was only a month or two before his own death, that he heard of another whom he had known and loved, who had entered the better land. A little girl, the daughter of a dear friend, who had long been languishing under disease, was released from her sufferings and taken home. His mother did not tell him of the fact in the presence of the family, but reserved it until she put him to bed at night. Then, as he was lying down to his peaceful slumbers, she leaned over him, and said, —

“Lonnie, I have something to tell you. You have another friend in heaven.”

“Have I?” he exclaimed, starting up, while his eye glistened at the thought: “who is it?”

“Lizzie D.”

“Is she there? When did she go? Oh, I’m glad.”

His mother told him the particulars of the little girl’s death, of her love for Jesus, her sweet and gentle spirit, and her fitness for the pure society of the redeemed.

“None go to heaven because they are good,” said his mother, “but because Jesus has washed them and made them clean in his own precious blood. Lizzie loved Jesus. She had given her heart to him, and he had forgiven her sins, and written her name in his book. Do you remember a verse that is in the chapter you like so much in the Bible,—‘There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth,

neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie ; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life ' ? ”

And when his mother kissed him good night, she left him counting up how many friends he had in heaven.

Dear children, do you love to think of heaven, and of the friends that are gathering there ? Did you ever consider that this is one way in which Jesus is “preparing a place” for us in those mansions above ? You know he said to his disciples, “In my Father's house are many mansions ; I go to prepare a place for you.” That home would not seem pleasant to us, if there was no one there to welcome us — no one whom we knew and loved. To go away to an unknown place among entire strangers is not agreeable to any one, and particularly to little children. Therefore he comes and selects from our side, from our homes and our hearts, some whom we

trust and cling to with affection, and places them there, that they may give to heaven a reality and attractiveness — a home-like feeling, which shall draw us up toward it.

We must not murmur, then, or complain against God when one and another of our dear ones are lifted up from the earthly to the heavenly home, for we know it can not be long before we too shall be transferred thither, to be sinless, and pure, and happy for evermore. We are, as the Bible expresses it, a “whole family, in heaven and on earth.” Only the narrow stream of death separates us. Then let us sing,—

“Oh, when will the period appear,
When I shall unite in your song?
I’m weary of lingering here,
And I to your Saviour belong!
I’m fettered and chained up in clay;
I struggle and pant to be free;
I long to be soaring away,
My God and my Saviour to see!”

CHAPTER VII.

LONNIE'S PRAYERS.

ALTHOUGH I have spoken of this dear little boy as being such an affectionate and good child, I would not wish you to think, little readers, that he was entirely free from faults. This could not be, for the Bible says, "There is none good but One; that is God."

A minister once said that children were angels for the first two or three years of their lives, and then, if God did not take them up to heaven, they began to lose their angelic sweetness, and to grow like others. He meant by this that as soon as they grew out of their sweet and cunning babyhood, they began to develop evil passions

and dispositions. This is true—for all children have by nature hearts prone to evil, and they learn much more easily to follow the bad than the good examples of those around them. They are selfish and willful, and show out their naughty, wayward dispositions, and angry and fretful tempers, and often form rude and unlovely habits.

So Lonnie, like all other little ones, displayed from time to time this tendency to evil, and his mother was pained at heart to see it. She had to correct him when he was naughty, and talked to him a great deal about his sinful heart, and the need he had of a new one. She told him many times the story of Jesus dying on the cross that our sins might be forgiven, and how willing he was to give the new and clean heart to all who would ask for it. She taught him a little prayer to repeat every morning by her side. “O God, please to

forgive all my naughty ways, and help me to be a good boy. Make me obedient, gentle, and kind, and give me a new heart, that I may be prepared to go to heaven." This he never omitted to say in the morning, after he had repeated, "Our Father, who art in heaven."

He often came down stairs in the morning when his sister had bathed and dressed him, before his mother was awake. He never came rushing into the room with a shout and a loud noise, as many boys would, but would walk gently up to the bedside, and waken her with a kiss. What a pleasant way for a mother to wake up in the morning, by the sweet kisses of a little darling on her cheek and lips! Lonnie's mother will never, never forget those wakings — oh, how she misses them now! Then he would kneel down by her bedside, and putting up his hands and closing his eyes, devoutly say his prayers; and some-

times he would add words and petitions of his own.

One morning he commenced his prayer in this way : “ O God, I thank thee that I was such a good boy yesterday ; please to help me to be good to-day too ; ” and then he went on and finished as usual. His father and mother were both very much surprised at the child’s words, and when he had risen from his knees, his papa said, —

“ Come here, Lonnie, and tell me what made you say your prayer in that way this morning.”

“ Why, papa,” he replied, “ I tried real hard to be good yesterday ; and wasn’t I ? ”

His parents both recollected that he had been uncommonly good and gentle the day before, and his mother recalled several instances when she had seen quite an effort to do right, and to overcome some of his bad habits. She knew better about it than

his father, because she was more with him. So she answered,—

“Yes, darling, I am sure you did try to be good.”

“And God helped me,—didn't he?—just as I asked him to. And oughtn't I to thank him?”

“Yes, indeed, my dear,” said his papa, “you did perfectly right;” and after the child had gone down to play, he added, that he thought it was “much more Christian than the prayers of many older people, who are always praying God to help them, but forget to thank him when he answers their prayers.”

Once his aunt Emma told him about some children where she had been visiting, who were uncommonly amiable with one another, and very ready in their obedience to their parents.

“They always ran in a minute,” she said, “when they were asked to do any

thing, and never said, 'I don't want to,' or pouted or cried about any thing they did."

That night, when he said his evening prayer, he added of his own accord,—

"O God, please to make me like those children aunt Emma has told me about."

CHAPTER VIII.

LITTLE LETTERS.

OUR little household pet was a great letter writer for one of his years. Of course he could not, at four years of age, manage a pen or pencil for himself; but he liked nothing better than to stand by the side of his mother or one of his sisters, and dictate while they wrote for him to some of his absent friends. They were always very particular to write just the very words he said, which made his letters quite amusing.

His mother once wrote to the sister next older than himself, who was away from home on a visit, "I have just been writing a letter to you from Lonnie, which I think will make you laugh a good deal.

He has a way, when he writes letters, of saying after every bit of news, *I like* somebody. That is a sort of rest or symphony, while he is thinking of something else to say, and always reminds me of the word 'Selah,' which we meet with so often in the Psalms." This is the letter:—

DEAR LILLIE: Phillie is going to bring me home something. I like mamma. Phillie is coming home some time next week. Lizzie C. I like. I took a nap to-day, and have just woke up. I like every body in this house. Nellie is a good girl, because she writes me letters sometimes. She teaches me to read and sew. I am making a bag to put my marbles in. The wind is east, and the B.'s have got home a'ready. I have been to church with mamma and Kittie. Yesterday I went to Greenwood with Kittie and the G.'s, two boys and four girls; and we staid there till night,

and I wandered all about, and I saw beautiful things. I saw a little rose in our lot, just like yours on your tree. I saw china dogs and china angels, and little houses full of playthings, and little wreaths of flowers, and beads, and goats, and all sorts of thing-a-ma-jigs. I like father, because he goes to the store and gets money and buys bread and butter for us. Oh, what a big rat Hannah caught yesterday morning! It had an enormous looking tail, and I buried it tail and all. Aunt Sarah I like, and I'm coming to see her pretty soon with father. I have got two papers Kittie brought me home from Sunday school. I have got a new hat. Father is going to buy me a little pair of suspenders, and a pair of India rubber boots some winter. I got some pears and apples at Greenwood, and we sat down on the bank and ate them—on the grass bank. I like the G.'s; and they are making windows in their library. Now

I see how windows are made, and how they are stuck together. I will send this letter in a little envelope. Kittie goes to school now, and Miss K. called here yesterday. I have got some toys Lizzie C. bought me. Lizzie H. has got home. She goes to school with Lizzie B. The R.'s have got home. Father painted the closet last night. Give my love to aunt E., and aunt S., and to you too. Father is so busy he can't write. When are you coming home, Lillie? Good-by.

Your brother,

LONNIE.

Isn't that a long, funny, jumbled-up letter? If we could put together all that he has written to father, mother, brother, sisters, aunts, and cousins, it would make quite a volume. I must copy one more, to show you how well he could tell a story. It was written to this same sister, a few weeks after the above. In the mean time

his brother Phillie, who had been to Europe, had returned home, and he was then anticipating the arrival of a dear aunt, who lived in a far-off land, and was coming with her children to visit her relatives in this country.

DEAR LILLIE : I wish aunt Katie would come ; I want to see her. I like you, Lillie, so much, that the next time you come home I will hug and kiss you. I love every one of the family, and I like every body besides. Phillie has come home sick. Phillie brought me a big ball and a little pop-gun, and I have such fun with 'em every day ! Ernie and I play with the ball down stairs in the basement, and it makes him laugh so ! But the pop-gun frightens him awfully, when it makes those noises.

I went over to uncle J.'s ship the other day, and staid to dinner. We had such fun on the top of the roof, when the monkey

tried to catch us ! One of the big girls, the cousins, wouldn't let the monkey come up on the top of the ship. Oh, I was so tired, when I came home, that I went to bed and kicked all about. Aunt V. gave Kittie a little blind bird that sings beautifully. The naughty people put out its eyes so as to make it sing better. It is called a goldfinch, and sings in the morning and at night.

I just gave Phillie a piece of ice. He likes ice, and I put in two or three little pieces in his mouth, 'cause mother was writing my letter.

Dear Lillie, I wish you was here to eat our nice grapes. To-day Annie took Ernie up out of the cradle while we were eating dinner, and she had to be with Phillie ; so she sent Ernie down stairs to get his dinner with us. And what do you think ? He never came, and after we were done we found him out on the back stoop, helping

his self to grapes. He walked right out of the back parlor door, and ate and ate, and he couldn't eat any dinner, he ate so many. And the other day Annie found him down on the terrace, way down over two pairs of stairs, up at the side, eating grapes. Oh, he eats lots.

Ernie and I went down on the terrace, and picked a whole lot of pretty grass for Nellie, and she put some of it in her hair. I sleep with Kittie now. I go to church, and Kittie brings me home such nice papers from Sunday school.

Good-by, Lillie.

LONNIE.

Perhaps you will think that the person who wrote the letter for him told him what to say; but no. They wrote just as the words came out of his little mouth; but we can not tell you on paper how pretty that little mouth looked, how his eyes beamed, and his whole face was lighted up

while he was saying them. His heart was brimful of love. He took a lively interest in every thing that was going on in the family, and so when he came to write he had plenty to tell.

CHAPTER IX.

BLACK AND WHITE ANGELS.

ONE Sabbath morning, Lonnie was talking with his father on his favorite subject—heaven; and then he wanted to know how the angels looked.

“They are all fair and beautiful,” said his papa, “and are clothed in white, shining garments, like the light.”

He made no reply, and asked nothing further at that time. He laid up the saying in his heart, and his mother, who was sitting by, concluded that she should hear something from it at some future day.

It was just so. A few days after, he came to his mother's side, as she was sitting at her work, and stood thoughtfully

a few moments ; then he looked up in her face, and said, —

“Mamma, how many heavens are there ?”

“Only one, my child,” replied his mother, looking up with surprise at such a question. “What made you ask me that ?”

“Isn’t there but one ?” inquired he, with a little sort of trouble in his voice. “Then will those old darkey beggars go to the same heaven we do ?”

“Certainly, my dear, if they love God, and are his children. Heaven is, one glorious temple, and God is the light of it ; and into it will be gathered all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, to dwell in his presence, in fullness of joy, for ever. But, my darling, why did you ask such a question ? Don’t you want the poor colored folks to go to the same heaven we do ?”

“Oh, yes, mamma, I love them, and I

want them to go to our heaven ; but last Sunday, papa told me that the angels were every one fair and beautiful ; and how can they change, mamma ? ”

His mother saw at once where the difficulty lay in her little boy's mind ; so, putting aside her work, she took the child up on her knee, and explained the matter to him.

“ In the first place, Lonnie, dear,” said she, “ I want to tell you how sorry I am to have you call the colored people darkeys. Those who are so unfortunate as to have a black skin don't like to be called that or any other bad name. They have trouble enough without that, and I hope you will never do it again. They like best to be called colored persons, and we should always try to please them. We should pity them, and try to relieve their sorrows, and not increase them. Don't you think so ? ”

“Yes ’m ; and I don’t care if they aren’t white, like you.”

“Neither does God, our kind heavenly Father, Lonnie, care about the color of the skin. The Bible says, ‘God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.’ God looks at the soul more than at the body. And you remember I told you the other day, that the body does not go to heaven at all. When we die, the body is put away in the ground, and soon molds to dust ; but the soul keeps on living, and the soul which has belonged to a black body is just as precious, and as much beloved, in the sight of God, as that which has belonged to a white body. No one could tell them apart in heaven. Nothing colors the soul but sin. That stains and blackens it all over, and only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash it pure and white again. But

every soul that has been thus washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb will be welcomed into heaven with songs of great rejoicing, and all will dwell together in peace, and purity, and love, and happiness for ever. Don't you feel glad to know this?"

"Oh, yes, I like that," answered Lonnie. "And I shall be sure to see every body I know when I get there."

"Every body who has loved God and tried to please him here. There's many a poor, black Christian looking forward with great joy to the time when this homely, black body shall be dropped, and the soul shall come forth clothed in light as an angel. I shall be glad for them — shan't you, darling?"

"Yes, indeed, mamma, so glad!" and the child's mind was henceforth at rest on that point.

CHAPTER X.

COUSIN HARRY.

AUNT KATIE, whose visit had been long and eagerly anticipated, arrived at length, and among her children was one little boy almost of the same age with Lonnie. He talked a great deal of his cousin Harry, and of the good times he hoped to have with him. He wanted very much to have them come to his own home.

“They must make aunt Sarah a visit first,” said his mother, “and then they will come here.”

“I wish they would make haste and come,” he would often say, “for I want to play with Harry; but I will write him a letter.”

It seemed a great satisfaction to him, when he could not see friends, that he could write to them, and his loving little epistles were very much prized. So he got his sister Minnie one day to write for him this letter to Harry:—

DEAR COUSIN HARRY: When are you coming on here? I suppose you are coming. I wish you were here now. If you are here in time, you will be here before my birthday. You tell aunt C. to come. It will be Christmas soon. Next June, I'll be five years old. Minnie's home, and mother's sick. You tell aunt S. and aunt C. Mother has got a great writing desk, and there were soldiers went by here yesterday. If you come here next Tuesday, perhaps I will give you something; you tell aunt Katie to come. I like you, and we've got a garret, and I play with my blocks in it. Are you a good boy? I go

to church. I've got acquainted with a little boy I didn't know before — Frankie B. Phillie has got a wardrobe, and he lets me put my boots in it. You're a nice boy. Are you as big as I? Phillie has got five rabbits, — one gray-head, and all the rest white-heads. You shall see 'em. He has pains to go down the terrace every day and fix 'em. I'm so glad you're coming! Mother gives me lots of nice things, peppermints, and monkeys, and all sorts of things. I've got a nice mamma. I've got a nice home. If you had been here before, you would have had some grapes, but now you can't have one. They're all gone. Good-by.

I'm your cousin, ALONZO.

He used to love to get letters, too, and when his sisters were away from home, they did not forget him. He left in his drawer a number that he had received

from aunt S., whose "precious one" he was, and from this same sister Minnie, when she was away at school. He kept them among his choicest treasures, and used to have them read to him over and over again. Once his sister wrote —

MY DARLING LITTLE BROTHER: Do you see what pretty paper Minnie is writing to you on? I found it in my desk to-night, and I thought Lonnie would like it.

I saw a pretty, white fox the other day, but it wasn't alive. It had been killed and stuffed, just as your black crow is stuffed. Then it was fastened on a board as if it was lying down. It was a pretty creature, with red eyes, like the rabbit's eyes. It came from Labrador. You don't know where that is, but you must learn to read very soon, so that you can study geography, and then you will know.

Oh, how much snow there is here! and

the little boys have fine times playing with it. I know you would like to be here ever so much. I don't believe you ever saw so much snow in all your life. You could build dozens of snow houses, and snow men to go into them. The little children here make angels, too.

There is one little boy no bigger than you, who lives pretty near here, and he has a cunning little sled to slide on. I saw him one day with his sled turned upside down, and he was trying to slide so. But it was such hard work that he soon gave it up.

You wrote me a nice little letter the other day. I want you to write me another pretty soon, and tell me how you liked the reins I sent you for a Christmas present. I hope you are kind, and let Ernest play with them, too. Sometimes he will be your horse, and sometimes you must be his.

Now be a good little boy ; don't quarrel with Lillie or Ernest ; mind father and mother, and write to me very soon. Good by, little one.

MINNIE.

The next letter after that contained an account of the sickness and death of the little boy who was spoken of in this letter. Lonnie was deeply interested in that, and brought it to his mother very often, that it might be read to him.

Then came one telling him about the way in which Minnie got acquainted with her little shy cousin Harry, which amused him greatly. Aunt Sarah, too, wrote him about Harry, and sent him a little song, which she said she had just repeated to Harry, and which she wanted him to learn.

All these things not only entertained him for the time, but they seemed to please and gratify his affectionate nature. We often remarked how much comfort the

dear little boy took in loving and being loved. Some children seem to take the kindnesses and attentions of their friends as a matter of course, and appear very indifferent and careless about it. It was not so with him. He seemed born to love, and the affection bestowed upon him was appreciated and enjoyed.

Two letters, one from his aunt and one from his sister, arrived only a few days before his death. They were written as soon as it was known that he was sick, and designed to amuse and comfort him during his illness; but they came too late. He listened to them, and then said, —

“Fold them up, mamma, and put them in my drawer,” but was too ill ever to call for them again.

When we remember how full of love his young heart was toward his dear friends, can we think that by death he has ceased to love them? Oh, no, indeed. We be-

lieve, and we delight to think, that in heaven he loves still, even more fondly and truly than he did on earth.

Some people seem to think, dear children, that when we die, we cease to feel interested in the friends we have left; but I can not think so. I think death is not such a wide separation as that, but that when the body is dropped, the soul lives on with just the same feelings and affections it had here, only purified and perfected. I could not think for a moment that the dear child forgets its mother, or the mother her beloved child. These affections, which God has given us, are a part of the soul, and must live on for ever; and when they are freed from the selfishness and sin that cling to them here below, they glow brighter and brighter. No, indeed; much as Lonnie loved his dear friends while he lived, he loves them more and better now. And if you have brothers

or sisters or any friends in heaven, you may be sure of this, that they have not forgotten you, but will love you more and more, and anticipate, with even more pleasure than you can, the time of your glad reunion in that heavenly world.

It was so ordered of God, that Lonnie never saw this cousin Harry, of whom he heard and talked so much. Before Harry arrived at the "nice home," the one who would have welcomed him so warmly had been laid away in the narrow resting place at Greenwood, and could only look down from an invisible sphere upon the scenes and pastimes of this.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE MORE TALK WITH MOTHER.

ONE day the little darling was down stairs in the kitchen with his mother. They were making pies together, and the little fellow was just as busy as his mother was. With his sleeves rolled up above the elbows, and a large apron pinned around him, and the tiny roller his brother had made for him, he was as happy as a prince. He would try to do just as his mother did ; and such funny little pies as he made ! All the time he was chatting just as fast as his tongue would go.

“Mamma,” said he, in the course of their talk, “what language do they speak up in heaven ?”

His mother was startled at the question, and did not answer right away. She was trying to think what could have suggested such an idea to his mind. It was some time before she could account for it, but finally reasoned it out in this way. His brother had just returned from a foreign land, and often playfully entertained them with words and expressions, and even songs, in German. His sisters studied French and Latin, and mingled these in their conversations with one another. He had an uncle who was a sea captain, and spoke Spanish and Portuguese and almost every other tongue. Thinking about heaven as much as he did, and knowing that it was the place where the good of every nation and clime were to be gathered, he was led to wonder what would be the language used in that "new country;" and this, no doubt, led him to ask his mother what at first seemed to her a very strange question.

“I don’t know as I can make you understand what I think about that, my dear,” she said at last, “you are such a little boy. When you grow older you will know.”

“But I am growing bigger every day ; why, I’m a big boy now—ain’t I ? I wear pants and boots. I guess I can understand.”

“Well, I will try to explain it if you will pay attention. You know you can’t look into my heart, and tell just what I am thinking about from time to time ; neither can I look into yours.”

“No. Go ahead, mamma.”

“But God is a spirit, and he can read your thoughts and mine, and every body’s. He doesn’t need to hear us speak words at all, for he can tell all that is inside just as plain as we can hear the words we speak to each other. Do you understand that ?”

“Oh, yes, I know.”

“Well, when we die, we leave our bodies here, and only our spirits go into the other world. They are all spirits there, and I don’t know as they need any words; but perhaps they know in a moment, as soon as they come near one another, just what their thoughts and feelings are, so that they really have no spoken language, as we are obliged to have in this world.”

“Oh, yes, I guess ’tis so—I know,” said he; and he really appeared to take in the idea which his mother thought it would be so difficult for him to receive.

“But we know very little about these things,” continued his mother. “The Bible says nothing about our condition in the other life, or very little, and no one has come back to tell us. We shall have to wait until we go there ourselves, and then we shall very quickly know all about it, and no doubt shall fall very easily into all the circumstances and ways of the spiritual

life. We know so much, — that all in heaven is beautiful, and bright, and pure, and happy. It will be very pleasant to live in heaven.”

Oh, how little that fond mother thought that the darling one to whom she was talking would so soon know all about it — so soon be able to teach her of the ways and doings of the “happy land, far, far away”! Then he was the scholar, coming to her for instruction and knowledge.

“His little heart was busy then,

And oftentimes perplexed

With thoughts about this world of ours,

And thoughts about the next.”

But it was not many weeks before she could say of him, —

“And I, thy earthly teacher,

Would blush thy powers to see;

Thou art to me a parent now,

And I a child to thee.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST CHRISTMAS.

THERE were two things at the Christmas season which he eagerly anticipated. One was the fair of the Juvenile Missionary Society, to which he had the promise of going. He emptied his savings bank, which had been given to him only a few months before, of all the moneys he had collected in it, to carry with him, that he might give them to the poor heathen children. His sympathies had been enlisted in behalf of the poor heathen children and their wretched mothers by looking at the pictures and hearing the verses about them in "Songs for the Little Ones," and he had carefully saved every penny for their good.

The other entertainment, so joyfully looked forward to, was the Christmas gathering at home. The year before we had had a tree ; but this season the programme was to be varied. The room was hung with garlands of evergreen, and the gifts arranged on the tables and mantel, and hung from the gas lights. In all our preparations Lonnie's enjoyment was the animating principle, for he was not only the youngest of the flock capable of appreciating the occasion, but the pet of the whole family ; and his eager interest in every plan made it a delight to study his pleasure, and to prepare surprises and delights for him on every hand. No one can forget, when the hour at last arrived, and the door of the illuminated room was opened, how his eyes sparkled, and his whole face was radiant with happiness. He was never boisterous when he was happy, as some children are, but very quiet, though his whole ap-

pearance indicated the reality of the joy he was drinking in.

We were pleased to see that it did not seem to give him a selfish joy when his own presents were given to him, but that he participated with equal delight in the gifts received by the others. His own, however, were treasured and prized most carefully. He was particularly pleased with the red, blue, and white reins his sister had knitted and sent him, and with a pretty little blue dressing gown, or sick gown, as he called it, made for him by his aunt Katie.

"I want to be sick now, mamma," said he, so desirous was he of wearing it.

"Oh, not sick, I hope," said his mother; "it isn't pleasant to be sick; but perhaps some day, when you have a cold, you may put it on."

It was not long, however, before the sick gown was brought into daily requisition.

The last evening it was taken off from him, it was hung with his other garments in the closet ; and there it is still. The dear little form that looked so sweetly enrobed in it is laid away ; but we can not put that from our sight.

The recollections of Christmas were as pleasant as the anticipations. He talked a great deal about Santa Claus, though he understood perfectly well that he was a fictitious character, and only represented father and mother, and other kind friends. His aunt sent him some verses she had read somewhere about a little fellow like himself. They are so pretty, and delighted him so much, that in memory of him, and for the pleasure of my little readers, I will copy them here. The picture of little Benny was so like our darling one, that it almost seemed as if his own mother must have written them.

LITTLE BENNY.

“I HAD told him Christmas morning,
As he sat upon my knee,
Holding fast his little stocking,
Stuffed as full as full could be,
And attentive listening to me,
With a face demure and mild,
That Santa Claus, who filled it,
Did not love a naughty child.

“ ‘We’ll be good, then, won’t we, moder?’
And from off my lap he slid,
Digging deep among the treasures
In his crimson stocking hid.
And I turned me to the table
Where a tempting goblet stood,
Brimming over with a dainty
Sent me by a neighbor good.

“But the kitten there before me
With his white paw nothing loth,
Sat by way of entertainment,
Lapping off the shining froth.
And in not the gentlest humor
At the loss of such a treat,

I confess I rather rudely
Thrust him out into the street.

“Then how Bennie’s blue eyes kindled!
Gathering up the precious store
He had cautiously been pouring
In his tiny pinafore,
With a generous look that shamed me,
Sprang he from the carpet bright,
Showing, by his mien indignant,
All a baby’s sense of right.

“‘Come back, Harney,’ called he loudly,
As he held his apron white;
‘You shall have my candy wabbit!’
But the door was fastened tight.
So he stood, abashed and silent,
In the center of the floor,
With defeated look, alternate
Fixed on me and on the door.

“Then, as by some sudden impulse,
Quickly ran he to the fire,
And while eagerly his blue eyes
Watched the flames mount high and higher,
In a brave, clear key he shouted,
Like some lordly little elf,

‘Santa Claus, come down the chimney,
Make my moder ’have herself.’

“‘I will be a good girl, Bennie,’
Said I, feeling the reproof,
And straightway recalled poor Harney,
Mewing on the gallery roof.
Soon the anger was forgotten;
Laughter chased away the frown,
And they gamboled there together
Till the Christmas sun went down.”

This scene was enacted over and over again for the two months that yet remained of his sunny life, to the great amusement of himself and his baby brother, as well as all the rest of the household.

His last Christmas! And when the year came round again with its duties and festivities, how sad it seemed to us! The life and delight of the occasion had gone—exhaled like the sweetness of a withered flower.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST MEMORIES.

It was not long after this that Lonnie sickened. The mild days of February, heralding spring, had just set in. For some time, no one thought him dangerously ill, though his watchful mother was alarmed by the scorching fever at night, and the languid, drooping manner by day. He was dressed until within three days of his death, for he liked better to be up than to be all the time in bed ; but he sat in his mother's arms a great part of the time, with his hand firmly clasped in hers, while she sung to him over and over again the little hymns he loved so much, and all the new ones she could think of besides.

Every member of the family brought some tribute of affection to him — toys, books, and pictures, fruits, and flowers. Everything that could be thought of to amuse and please him was constantly coming in. He was grateful and pleased with all his gifts; yet there were some for which he manifested a special pleasure. One was the little lamb, of which we have already spoken, and which, we think, reminded him of the little lambs of the Good Shepherd. His brother bought him a kite, and on the very last evening that he was dressed, he sat in his mother's arms by the center table, and saw it prepared for flying.

Another present that afforded him much gratification was a new picture book his mother procured for him, and which he kept by his side and looked into from time to time as long as he lived. But "Songs for the Little Ones" he loved better than any other thing. It was his choicest and

best friend, and nothing, to his very latest hour, soothed him so much as his mother's voice, reading some of those sweet pieces to him.

The letters which he received in these last days from beloved, absent friends, and to which we have already alluded, were a great comfort to him.

“Bring me my kite, mamma,” he said, the day after it had been fixed for him.

His kite was brought, and he looked at it intently on both sides for a minute, then gently laid it down, and turned away from it.

“Put it up,” he said; “I don't want it any more.”

“Now, mamma, I want my lamb.”

It was brought.

“'Tis a pretty lamb — isn't it, mamma? Please put it up there where I can see it all the time — will you?”

It was placed upon the mantel-piece

where he had pointed, and there it stands yet. No one feels a heart to remove it.

The last Sabbath morning of his life, he sat up in his father's arms during family worship, which was attended purposely in his sick room. When reading was finished, his papa asked, "What shall we sing this morning?"

"Poor and needy," answered Lonnie, as if the question had been addressed to him, and instantly struck the tune. This hymn was the second one that he had committed to memory, and was a great favorite. He liked the tune, too, — "Rock of Ages," — which his mother had taught him to sing it in, and frequently asked to have it sung at family worship. He never was satisfied, in repeating or singing it, to omit a single verse, but must always go through with the whole four. This morning, we all commenced it with him, but his voice sounded so clear and earnest, and there was some-

thing so indescribably sweet in his appearance, that the voices all ceased, one after another, until his alone was left, and he went through with the first two verses by himself. But his father was afraid the effort would hurt him, and would not suffer him to proceed. We can never, never forget this his last singing.

How gentle and patient was the dear child through the whole of this last illness, which continued fifteen weary days! It was nasal diphtheria, and, as is often the case with this insidious and comparatively unknown disease, its progress eluded our vigilance, until it had got fatal hold of the vital powers. He never uttered a murmuring or fretful word, submitted willingly to all the treatment proposed, and scarcely a groan escaped him, though at times his distress must have been very great. He was too sick, after a few days, to say his prayers. "You say them for

me, mamma," he said; and as he leaned on her bosom and listened, while she prayed in low words for him, he seemed satisfied.

"Perhaps," said his mother, one day, "you will never get well, my darling. Are you willing to go to heaven now?"

He hesitated a moment, and then he said, "I think I would rather stay here longer with you and papa." His earthly home was very pleasant to him. "I have a nice home," he had said to his cousin in one of his little letters.

"But if God thinks it best for you to go now, my dear, you would, I hope, be willing. You know we have talked a great deal of heaven — what a pleasant, beautiful home it is."

"Yes," he replied, "I will go. Sing 'Happy Land.'"

He talked but very little during his whole sickness. It seemed to hurt him to

speaking; and much as we should have been gratified to have learned more of what was passing in his active mind, we refrained from conversation with him.

Some days later, when he was suffering severely, his mother whispered, —

“Dear little lamb, it will soon be over, and you will be where there is no more pain, or sickness, or death. Yes, Lonnie, dear, you will only have to die this once, and when it is over, you will be in heaven for ever.”

“Will you go with me, mamma?” and he clasped her hand tighter.

“My little lamb, I can not go with you, but Jesus will. He will take you in his arms, and carry you safely through.”

The little head turned with a quiet, resting way upon his pillow, and while his mother sang “Happy Land,” he fell into a doze.

He would have nothing sung to him but

this little hymn for three days before he died. A few hours before he breathed his last, his father came into the room, bringing a bunch of violets. He seemed very much pleased with them, and held them in his hand until, in a paroxysm of distress, he lost them.

"How do you do, now?" asked his papa.

"Pretty well," he replied, cheerfully. This was the answer he invariably gave to the oft-repeated question.

He asked for "Happy Land," again. Father and mother sang it together, and when they finished, he said, eagerly, "Sing more ; sing something else."

They sang, "I want to be an angel," and then, at his request for more, "There is a land of pure delight." It was the last of earthly music he heard, but in another hour he was borne with music of the angels to make one of the heavenly choir. With one brief spasm, he passed gently

away from the loving arms that tenderly clasped, but could not detain him; and our darling Lonnie, the cherished flower of the household, the angel child, the precious one, our little lamb, was safe in the care of the Good Shepherd. We could not mourn for him, but for ourselves how deeply!

A friend wrote, on hearing of his departure, "He was the sweetest boy I ever saw; it seems as if the translation to the heavenly home would be natural to him. I am filled with gratitude that such a beautiful life budded and blossomed in your home, and that I saw it."

Another says, in a letter of sympathy, "How thankful I am for those bright days a year ago, when we were with you, and so enjoyed the light of that beautiful life! Glorious little creation! He will be a joy for ever to me. What if God had never made him!"

Thus was he loved and mourned of all.
In thinking of him, these lines of the poet
will remain ever uppermost in our minds :

“God looked among his shining band,
And one was wanting there
To swell along the holy land
The voice of praise and prayer.”

And so he came for our Lonnie. Was
he not a favored one, to be chosen of God
to fill that vacant place in heaven? Were
we not favored, too, that God should have
selected the one he wanted from out our
home?



CHAPTER XIV.

GIVEN TO GOD.

“OH, mother, those dear little boots, and no little feet to put in them!” exclaimed Kittie, as she opened a closet door, and saw the well-used, tiny boots on the shelf.

There they stood, just where Lonnie’s own hands had placed them—the hands that were folded now over the breast of a quiet sleeper in Greenwood. His hands would handle them, his feet would occupy them, no more—no more. They were his first boots, his pets, his admiration. How the sweet face beamed with pleasure when they were brought home! How eagerly he welcomed the first snow, that he might use them! What an undertaking it was to get

the little, inexperienced limbs into them! What care he took to bestow them in their proper place, when they were taken off! Many and pleasant were the thoughts of the dear, departed one which the sight of those little boots awakened. Kittie felt it all, and wept.

“Oh, mother,” said she, “is he gone for ever? Can it be? It just seems as if he had gone out of town on a visit, and that we must soon see him back again. Oh, mother, mother, will he never, never come?”

“Mother, he was the sweetest of the whole family,” said the loving sister, again, “the most cunning, the prettiest, the best. Why did God take *him*? He picked out the very choicest — didn’t he?”

“And should we not be willing?” said the mother, trying to smile through the fast falling tears, “to give God the best? Is he not worthy to receive the most beau-

tiful and costly offering we can make? A thing we do not prize, my dear child, is never worth giving away; a gift that costs us nothing can never be acceptable. If God had suffered us to choose for him, should *we* not have selected the loveliest and the best, — even the very same?”

“Yes, mother, though it would have been hard, I think we should. We should not have been satisfied to have given him any other.”

“God *wanted* our darling,” continued the mother, “and though we wanted him, too, we know he is better off in heaven; and could we hold him back? There he will always be happy; and oh, the best thought of all is, he will *never sin*. How that comforts me! He will grow still sweeter and lovelier there, and one day he will be ours again. Can we not cheerfully give him up for a little while?”

A little hymn was written for his sister

Lillie by one who knew and loved both the children. Some of my little readers may like to read and learn it, too:—

“My brother’s with the angels;
I think I see him stand
With crown, and harp, and white array,
In that far, happy land;
He did not *die*, for Jesus
Says in his holy word,
They *never* die who love and trust
In him, their living God.

“He only dropped the body;
The spirit flew away,
And left below the useless form,
The cold and senseless clay.
But *he* has gone to heaven;
There, safe from every ill,
My darling brother lives with God,—
He lives, and loves me still.”

Alonzo was nearly five years old when he died; now he is almost six, for he has been a year in heaven. I have not told

you the half of what I know about this pleasant and affectionate child, but I have written enough to show you that he loved Jesus, and that Jesus loved him, and to interest you, I hope, in the beautiful home to which he has gone.

Have you any little brother or sister in heaven? Then what you read here will, I hope, comfort you concerning them. Some people have an idea that when a friend dies, it is the last we know of them; that when the body is put away in the tomb, they cease to belong to us, and they doubt very much if we shall ever find our beloved ones again. But this is a sad, a dreadful thought. It would fill my soul with anguish to entertain it, and I can not bear that any little boy or girl who reads these pages should have it.

No, dear children, we are taught in the Bible, I think, very clearly, that it is the body alone that slumbers in the ground—

the body from which life and sense have departed — the form in which the soul has lived on earth, and which, when it enters heaven, it drops because it needs it no longer. We are to have another, a spiritual body in heaven, suited to the condition and circumstances of that spiritual world. We take this one when it is cast off, and bury it, just as we take the garments our friends have left, and fold them up, and put them away.

The *soul*, whether in the body or out of it, is what we know and love as a friend. At death, that goes into a world unseen by mortal eyes, but we have no reason to think it is far away from us. On the contrary, I think the Bible teaches us that we live right in the very midst of it, only that we can not perceive it with our senses. And we have every reason to believe, as I have told you before, that the dear ones who have died out of our homes, in their new

condition of life love us still, even better than before ; that they know us, and see us, and are interested in our life. And, more than this, I believe that when God our Father wants an angel to be a “ ministering spirit ” to us, to “ encamp round about ” us, to shield, and guard, and guide, and help us, he would, in preference to others, choose *our friends*, those who have gone from our sides, those who have known and loved us on earth, to come in their unseen form, and do these blessed errands of love for him. Is it not a pleasant thought ? Does it not comfort us when we think of our absent ones ? Does it not seem to draw us nearer to them, and so, nearer to heaven and to God ?

And do you not think, too, that these redeemed and glorified spirits are very deeply interested in our *being good* ? Do you not think they are severely pained when we do wrong, and go astray from the

dear Saviour? Little reader, if you have a mother in heaven, do you not believe that she is even more anxious than she was when on earth to have you love God, and give your heart to the Saviour, and walk in the ways of wisdom? Do you not think that she feels sorry, yes, even sorry and sad in heaven, if she sees her dear child transgressing the commandments of God, and walking in the broad road of sin?

Yes, and your dear little brothers and sisters, too, share in the same feelings. They are all watching you. Never forget, then, the "cloud of witnesses," with which the Bible says we are compassed about continually; and let this be another and a very strong motive to help you do right. And may every one of you, when you shall have crossed the river of death, stand rejoicing on the blessed heights of heaven to join with those who have gone before you in the sweet employments and enjoyments of God's home.

OUR LITTLE CHILD WITH RADIANT EYES.

WITH seeking hearts we still grope on,
Where dropped our jewel in the dust;
The looking crowd have long since gone,
And still we seek with lonely trust:
O little child with radiant eyes!

In all our heartache we are drawn,
Unweeping, to your little grave;
There on your heavenly shores of dawn
Breaks gentler sorrow's sobbing wave,
O little child with radiant eyes!

Dark underneath the brightening sod,
The sweetest life of all our years
Is crowded, in a gift to God.
Outside the gate we stand in tears!
O little child with radiant eyes!

Heart-empty as the acorn cup,
That only fills with wintry showers,

The breaking cloud but brimmeth up
With tears this pleading life of ours:
O little child with radiant eyes!

We think of you, our angel kith,
Till life grows light with starry leaven;
We ne'er forget you, darling, with
The gold hair waving high in heaven!
Our little child with radiant eyes!

Your white wings grown will conquer death!
You are coming through our dreams e'en now,
With azure peep of heaven beneath
The arching glory of your brow,
Our little child with radiant eyes!

We can not pierce the dark, but oft
You see us with looks of pitying balm;
A hint of heaven—a touch more soft
Than kisses—all the trouble is calm:
Our little child with radiant eyes!

Think of us wearied in the strife,
And when we sit by sorrow's streams,
Shake down upon our drooping life
The dew that brings immortal dreams:
Our little child with radiant eyes!

WHITE ROBES.

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”—REV. 7 : 14.

WHITE, for heaven's infant bands!
Passed they not spotless from the earth away,
Pale blossoms lying in the nerveless hands,
Pure kisses lingering on the precious clay?
Earth's lily-bells transplanted, sweet and lowly,
White robes for them, for innocence is holy.

And for the young, pure white!
They loved the Master much, and for his sake
Life's vainer loves and laurels cast from sight;
Now, in the heavenly places they awake
Celestial music, and palm-branches bearing,
They who are worthy walk, white raiment wearing.

And they who, gathered in
From the hot ranks of mid-life's battle-field,
Bring trophies of their victories over sin,
The tried and tempted, with their foreheads sealed
With the Great Name, the heroes, martyrs, sages;
White robes for the redeemed of countless ages.

There venerated bands
Are bathed in founts of fadeless youth and bloom ;
Bent form and furrowed brow, with trembling
hands,
And silvered hairs, pass not beyond the tomb.
Led by the Master, through deep tribulation,
White robes await them—garments of salvation.
Gathered from orient climes,
And western shores, and tropic forests deep,
From polar winters,—and from ancient times
Down to the last fair babe that fell asleep !
By suffering purified ; perfected, blest,
And gathered into everlasting rest.
O suffering Lord, through thee
Whose blood alone can make the crimson white !
Looking in pity on our strivings, see
The weight of sin, and make the burden light.
Our robes of righteousness are poor and vain !
Baptize us in that fount that leaves no stain !
Our faith, hope, charity,
Inspire, inform, till they grasp heavenly things,
Till the whole human brotherhood shall lie
In the benignant shadow of their wings ;
So purify and bless until there be
White robes at last for even such as we.

